

State of New Jersey



July 2012

Dear Stakeholders:

You likely know that last week, the Governor signed the restructuring bills, one of which moved the Divisions of Aging and Community Services and Senior Benefits and Utilization Management to DHS – which will form our new Division of Aging Services (DoAS). We have some work ahead of us as we integrate this new Division into DHS, and we'll move forward together under the very capable leadership of Lowell Arye, Deputy Commissioner; Kathy Mason, Director of DoAS and Nancy Day, Deputy Director. DHS has added [DoAS](#) to its website but until the content is properly supported through our servers, the links will be housed with the Department of Health.

Also included in the FY'13 restructuring was the transfer of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities from DHS to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The transition of children will be phased in during the next six months. During this time, DDD will continue to provide all current services to children with the exception of newly identified emergencies and children on the DHS/DCF interdepartmental transfer list. For more information, read the [stakeholder communication](#) that was issued today.

June was busy with non budget activities, as well. Early in the month, I had the pleasure of visiting [Trenton Psychiatric Hospital's Greenhouse](#), a therapeutic and vocational training opportunity for patients. It was incredible to see the [selection of seasonal plants](#), grown from seed and tended to by patients with the support of staff. I'm so proud of their accomplishments.

In addition:

- I [helped](#) a couple of residents move into a brand new Community Access Unlimited group home in Scotch Plains. It was a great feeling to help them [settle into their rooms](#) by hanging pictures, setting up their stereos, putting their clothes away and making it their own. The men were thrilled to be living in the community and sharing this very special occasion with each other and the staff from CAU.
- I attended the [AARP Day at the Capital](#) event with Governor Chris Christie and Department of Health Commissioner Mary O'Dowd.
- The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired [launched an innovative pilot](#) project with 15 students that replaces the need for costly text enlargement and printing expenditures by using a reader application on the iPad. I was able to see firsthand at their [training session](#), the value and potential of this technology for students with visual impairment.
- Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Lynn Kovich, gave remarks at the NJ Recovery Center Graduation Ceremony in Paterson. She was extremely moved by the ceremony and immediately wrote a [Letter to the Editor](#) celebrating the graduates' achievements.
- The Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) Commission held its [annual meeting](#) during which I had the chance to talk with [families](#) who have benefitted from grants to offset medical costs associated with their children's illness that were not covered by health insurance. It is always such an uplifting event to see the children who are making great strides toward recovery with the support of Commission funds.
- The Senator Garrett W. Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital in Glen Gardner was closed. Part of the facility will be repurposed by the New Jersey [Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs](#) as Veterans' Haven North - a Vocational/Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Veterans.

This month we'll be doing more to highlight community based programs, services and living opportunities for seniors and individuals with disabilities. If you have a program or service you would like me to visit, please email [Nicole Brossoie](#), Assistant Commissioner of Public Affairs, so she can consider it when she compiles our monthly outreach plan.

Thank you and have a safe, enjoyable summer.

Regards,

Jennifer Velez

Commissioner